

Kevin Diaz, Hot Dish blog

The U.S. House passed a \$650 billion Pentagon spending bill Friday that includes a measure by Minnesota Democrat Betty McCollum cutting nearly \$125 million for military bands.

Even so, McCollum and fellow Minnesota Democrat Keith Ellison were among 75 Democrats and 12 Republicans who voted against the bill, which funds war operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The final vote was 336-87.

The bands amendment was approved Thursday by a vote of 226-201, limiting spending to \$200 million for fiscal year 2012.

"At a time when emergency nutritional support is being cut for hungry infants and women and other painful cuts to vulnerable Americans, spending more than \$200 million on military bands is an extra America cannot afford," McCollum said.

Another McCollum measure that would have curbed military sponsorships in NASCAR races did not pass muster in the House. Republicans portrayed the racing sponsorships as a valuable recruiting tool.

So far, there is no similar Senate provision to cut spending on military bands, which was offered as a deficit-reduction measure.